

Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary Tree Planting Ceremony

Celebrating 100 years of the Ladies Auxiliary



*Knights of Peter Claver, Ladies Auxiliary
Community Project*

*Saint Nicholas Catholic Church
Houston's First Black Catholic Parish*

Reverend Eliseus Ogbonna Ibeh, MSP
July 23, 2026





Centennial Tree Planting Ceremony

Opening Prayer

Rev. Eliseus Ogbonna Ibeh, MSP

Welcome

Grand Lady Cassandra Edmondson Saint Nicholas Court # 15

Occasion

Most Esteemed Supreme Lady, Hilda L. Wiltz

Most Worthy Supreme Knight, Christopher Pichon

A brief acknowledgment of the 100year milestone and the purpose of planting the oak tree.

Poem Reading

"The Oak Tree"

Lady Patricia Clark our Lady of Fatima Court 139.

Centennial Reflection

Esteemed Supreme Lady Geralyn Shelvin

Tree Planting & Dedication

- Blessing of the soil
- Members place soil around the tree
- Watering of the tree

Dedication Statement:

"We dedicate this oak to the Claver women who came before us, and to those who will continue to stand tall in faith."

Closing Prayer—

Centennial Claver Prayer

Final Song

"We've Come This Far by Faith"

**Presentation of Check to Saint Nicholas Catholic Church
Group Photo**

Refreshments in the Church hall





"The Oak Tree"

"A mighty wind blew night and day.
It stole the Oak Tree's leaves away.

Then snapped its boughs and pulled its bark
Until the Oak was tired and stark.
But still the Oak Tree held its ground
While other trees fell all around.

The weary wind gave up and spoke,
"How can you still be standing Oak?"
The Oak Tree said,

I know that you can break each branch of mine in two,
Carry every leaf away, shake my limbs and make me sway.

But I have roots stretched in the earth,
Growing stronger since my birth.

You'll never touch them, for you see
They are the deepest part of me.

Until today, I wasn't sure of just how much I could endure.
But now I've found with thanks to you,
I'm stronger than I ever knew."



Poem by: Ray Ryder JR.





Centennial Tree Planting Reflection

For 100 years, the Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of Peter Claver has stood like the oak in this poem — strong, rooted, and unshak-
en.

The poem tells the story of an oak tree battered by winds that stripped its leaves, bent its branches, and tested its strength. Yet the oak remained standing because its roots ran deep.

This is the story of our sisterhood.

For a century, our Ladies have faced the winds of social change, the storms of discrimination, the pressures of economic hardship, and the challenges of raising families, serving parishes, and uplifting communities. And still — like the oak — we stood.

We stood when the world shifted. We stood when resources were few. We stood when our voices were overlooked. We stood when service demanded sacrifice. We stood because our roots were planted in Christ, in community, and in each other.

The oak in the poem discovers it is stronger than it ever knew. So have we.

Over 100 years, the Ladies Auxiliary has grown deeper in purpose, wider in service, and taller in faith. Our founders planted the first seeds, never imagining how far their branches would reach. Today, we honor them by planting this oak — a living symbol of our endurance.

Just as the oak declares that its roots are the deepest part of it, we declare today that our faith, our unity, and our commitment to service are the deepest part of us.

This tree will grow long after this centennial year has passed. It will stand as a reminder that the Ladies Auxiliary endured, overcame, and blossomed into a mighty force for good.”





The **KNIGHTS** of **PETER CLAVER** and **LADIES AUXILIARY**

2026 CENTENNIAL PRAYER - LADIES AUXILIARY -

“Rooted in Faith...Flourishing in Service”

God of Mercy and God of Love,

We have come this far by faith and humbly seek your blessing as we honor the 100th Anniversary of our Ladies Auxiliary. You have united us as a family of Clavers, where Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity are our guiding virtues. By your grace, we have answered your call to welcome all women into our fold, bringing them one by one to your Church. We strive to reach out to the least among us - the poor, the marginalized, and the alienated. As your beloved family, we gather and are nourished by your Word and the Sacraments, empowering us to share your love and healing with others. Rooted in your Holy Spirit, may we embrace the future with the same gratitude, hope and vision as those who have gone before us, committing ourselves to a new century of service. Inspired by our patron, St. Peter Claver, may we live humbly and simply as instruments of your grace and peace. We offer this prayer through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother, Mary and in the name of the One who is the same Yesterday, Today and Forever Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Amen



ST. PETER CLAVER 100TH ANNIVERSARY CENTENNIAL SPIRITUAL TEAM

Most Esteemed Hilda L. Wiltz, 15th Supreme Lady

Esteemed Vertelle Kenion, 13th Supreme Lady

Gracious Lady Deborah Smith, Past Supreme Pilot

Grand Lady Sister Roberta Fulton, SSMN

Lady Patricia Clark, Area Deputy

Knights of Peter Claver, Inc. (2025)





Tree Planting Song

Sung by: Pastor, Jaie Robinson

We've Come This Far by Faith

we've come this far by faith
Leaning on the Lord
Trusting in His holy word
He never fail me yet
Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh
No turning around
We've come this far by faith

we've come this far by faith
Leaning on the Lord
Trusting in His holy word
He never fail me yet
Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh
No turning around
We've come this far by faith

I will trust in the Lord Till I die
I will trust in the Lord Till I die

I'm gonna stay on the battle field
I'm gonna stay on the battle field

I'm gonna treat everybody right Till I die
I'm gonna treat everybody right Till I die

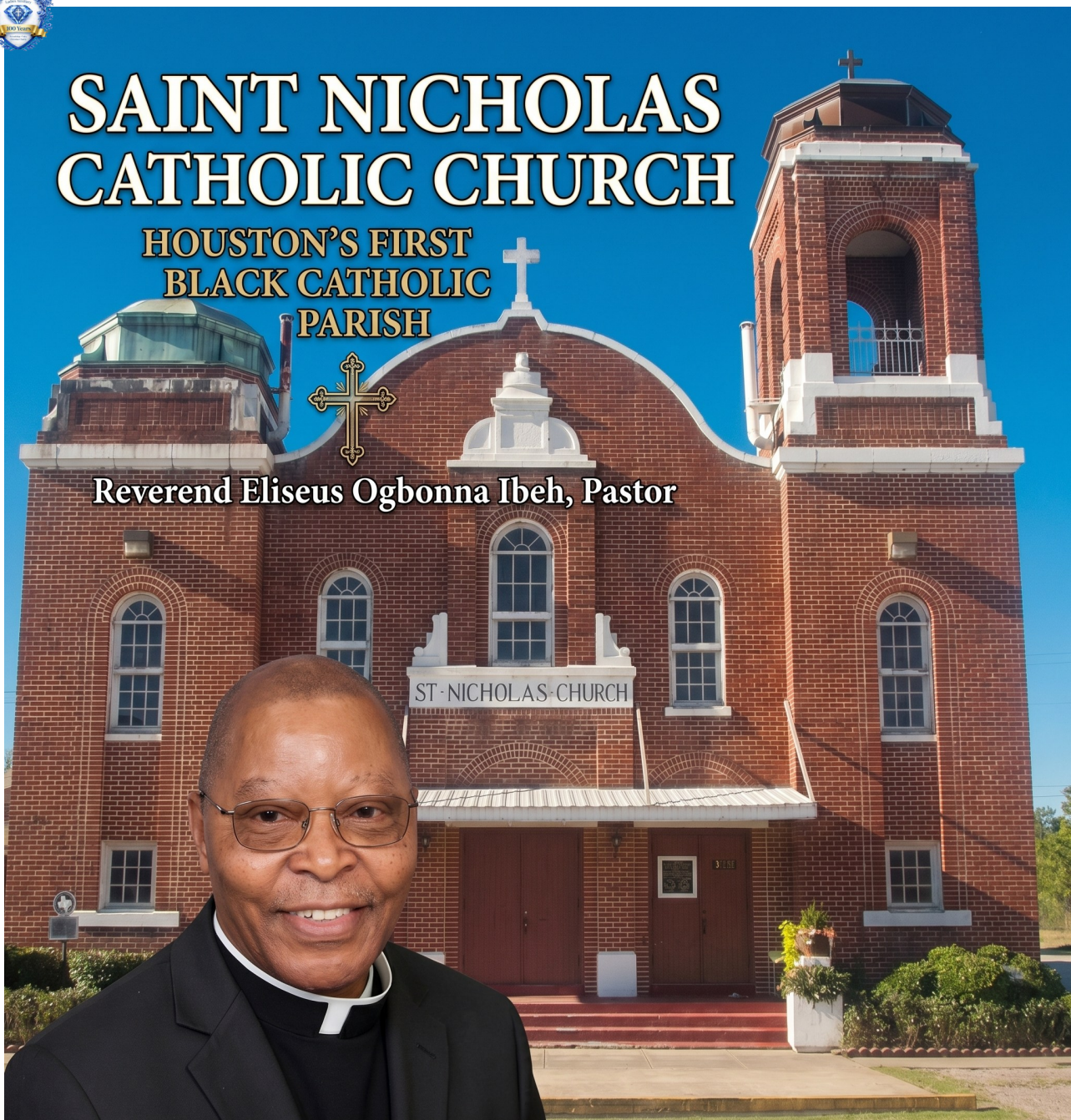




SAINT NICHOLAS CATHOLIC CHURCH

HOUSTON'S FIRST
BLACK CATHOLIC
PARISH

Reverend Eliseus Ogbonna Ibeh, Pastor

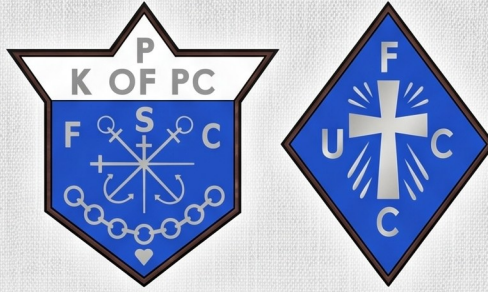


On behalf of the Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary,

We extend our deepest appreciation to Father, Ogbonna Ibeh for his gracious participation and for providing the ideal setting for this symbolic tree planting.

With heartfelt gratitude and the collective love of our Claver Family we offer our sincere thanks.





Knights of Peter Claver & Ladies Auxiliary



Oldest Black Catholic
Organization in the
United States



As we plant this oak tree, may our organization—rooted in the Word and strengthened by faith—remain steadfast and unshakable.

May we continue to extend the fullness of God's love and serve as a living expression of His hands at work in the world. And may we remain faithful laborers in His vineyard, committed to the mission entrusted to us for generations to come.





Lady Patricia Clark,
Texas State Area Deputy
Tree Planting Committee Chair

On behalf of the Centennial Tree Planting Committee, we are deeply honored to coordinate this ceremony as a distinguished and enduring testament to our organization's mission and its steadfast commitment to charitable service.

Blessing of the Tree

"As its branches open wide to the sky, may our arms open wide to embrace the greatest and smallest of your creatures. As its leaves provide food and oxygen, may we provide food for the hungry and hope for the lost. Bless this tree as a living reminder of your love and grace always among us. Amen."

Acknowledgment

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who made this project possible

Grant A. Jones, *Executive Director* of the Knights of Peter Claver, Inc.

Lady Carla Killingsworth chairperson of the Centennial Celebration

Verdant Tree Plant Company

Reverend Eliseus Ogbonna Ibeh, MSP

Reverend Thomas Frank SSJ

Marie Ledet, Grand lady of Our Lady of Fatima Court 139

State of Louisiana, District 7

Jay Young, Grand Knight, Council 222

Cassandra Edmondson Grand Lady, Saint Nicholas Court 15

Frances Broussard, Vice Grand Lady, Saint Nicholas court 15

Family of Hilda L. Wiltz , Supreme Lady

Esteemed Supreme Ladies

Knights of Peter Claver, Ladies Auxiliary Court Board



